

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

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March 9, 2015  
Start: 10:21 a.m.  
Recess: 10:40 a.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm,  
14th Fl.

B E F O R E:  
INEZ D. BARRON  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
James Vacca  
Fernando Cabrera  
Jumaane D. Williams  
Laura A. Cumbo  
Ydanis A. Rodriguez  
Vanessa L. Gibson

[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Good morning. I'm Inez Barron, Chair of the Committee on Higher Education. I want to welcome you to today's hearing on the President's free community college plan.

Education is an entitlement that belongs to everyone; though we may differ about methods, we all take it for granted that children are entitled to a first-class public education and until the State took CUNY over in 1976, we took it for granted that every New Yorker was entitled to a first-class free college education. At that time the City was bankrupt and falling apart; now the City is a magnet for the richest people in the world and we are subsidizing housing for people who are able to spend \$93 million for an apartment while we increase the tuition at our public university; our priorities have to change.

With that in mind, today we will vote on Preconsidered Resolution No. 0585 in support of President Obama's plan to make community college free for anyone who maintains a 2.5 GPA. The plan calls for the Federal Government to spend \$60 billion over 10 years and to pay 75 percent of the tuition costs

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2 for eligible students, provided the states pay the  
3 remaining 25 percent and do not decrease their  
4 existing financial commitments to community colleges.

5 Before I open the vote I want to  
6 recognize my colleagues on the Committee, Council  
7 Member Vacca, Council Member Rodriguez, Council  
8 Member Gibson and thank my Legislative Director and  
9 CUNY Liaison, Ndigo Washington and the committee  
10 staff, our Finance Analyst, Jessica Ackerman, our  
11 Policy Analyst, Tonya Cyrus and our Legislative  
12 Counsel, Jeff Campagna.

13 I also wanna just have a little  
14 highlight; this is Women's History Month and I just  
15 wanna highlight Mary McCleod Bethune, the Founder of  
16 Bethune-Cookman College, who started the college with  
17 \$1.50 and five students, along with her young son.  
18 So with that, if there are any discussions on the  
19 Resolution; if not, please call the roll.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,  
21 Committee Clerk, Roll Call Vote Committee on Higher  
22 Education, Resolution 0585. Chair Barron.

23 CHAIRPERSON BARRON: I vote aye.

24 COMMITTEE CLERK: Vacca.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: I vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Rodriguez.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Aye and I would like to be added to this Res. [sic]

COMMITTEE CLERK: Gibson.

COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: I proudly vote aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of 4 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative; no abstention, item is adopted.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: We'll hold the roll open for 15 minutes. Thank you.

[pause]

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: We are reopening the Roll Call.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Cumbo.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Permission to explain my vote.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I wanna thank Council Member Barron for keeping the vote open for me; I wouldn't have wanted to miss this important vote, and I congratulate you on this Resolution and look forward to working with you to make it a reality, on all levels of government and this will be

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an incredible opportunity for all of our students in New York City and beyond, so I thank you for introducing this and I vote aye.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: Thank you...

[crosstalk]

COMMITTEE CLERK: Current vote on Reso 0585 is now 5 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative; no abstentions.

[pause]

COMMITTEE CLERK: Final vote in Committee on Higher Education, Resolution 0585, is now 5 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions.

CHAIRPERSON BARRON: This meeting is now adjourned.

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date March 23, 2015